

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3345

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1768

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US

SUBJECT: GUYANESE REACTION TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: (A) STATE 211862, (B) GEORGETOWN 1712, (C) GEORGETOWN
1761, (D) GEORGETOWN 1677

SUMMARY: DIRECT COMMENTS FROM GOG OFFICIALS AND INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM SOURCES CLOSE TO GOG INDICATE THAT FONMIN WILLS AND OTHER TOP OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT NORTH KOREANS CAUSED THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT. WILLS TOLD ME THIS ACTION SERVED TO DISCREDIT DPRK AT COLOMBO AND CAUSED PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM TO CANCEL HIS SCHEDULED VISIT TO NORTH KOREA. MEDIA COVERAGE ON INCIDENT HAS BEEN LIMITED TO AN AP STORY AUGUST 22.

1. FONMIN WILLS AND ANOTHER MEMBER OF GUYANA'S DELEGATION TO THE COLOMBO NASC HAVE TOLD ME THAT NORTH KOREANS HAD BEEN BIG LOSERS AT COLOMBO DUE TO THEIR CONDUCT AT THE MEETING, INCLUDING THEIR ATTEMPT TO USE THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT FOR POLITICAL AND PROPAGANDA GAINS (SEE REFS B AND C). THE DMZ AFFAIR CAUSED PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM TO CANCEL A SCHEDULED TRIP TO NORTH KOREA (REF D). FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL HAS SAID TO ME THAT BURNHAM WILL NOT RESCHEDULE THE VISIT.

2. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM RELIABLE SOURCE THAT FONMIN WILLS HAS TOLD OTHER CABINET MINISTERS THAT GOG IS CONVINCED THAT NORTH KOREANS DELIBERATELY CAUSED THE PANMUNJOM INCIDENT. TRADE MINISTER KING REPORTEDLY WAS ADAMANT THAT NORTH KOREAN GROUP WHICH IS
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EXHIBITION HERE NOT BE PERMITTED TO HANG BURNHAM'S PICTURE ALONG-SIDE ONE OF KIM IL SUNG, AND IN EXPLAINING HIS REFUSAL TO LOCAL PRESIDENT OF THE GUYANESE-KOREAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, USED ABOVE-DESCRIBED GOG VIEWS ON DMZ AFFAIR AS HIS REASON.

3. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE INCIDENT HAS BEEN LIMITED TO AN ASSOCIATED PRESS ARTICLE FROM SEOUL WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN THE GOG-CONTROLLED "CHRONICLE" AUGUST 22. THE REPORT INDICATED TWO US OFFICERS HAD BEEN KILLED IN DMZ, S HAD SENT NAVAL AND OTHER REINFORCEMENTS TO SOUTH KOREA, AND NORTH KOREA CHARGED THAT THE NAVAL TASK FORCE WAS FORCING A CONFLICT BY ENTERING NORTH KOREAN WATERS.

4. COMMENT: THE DPRK HAS DAMAGED ITS STANDING IN GUYANESE OFFICIAL CIRCLES AS A RESULT OF THE INCIDENT AT PANMUNJOM AND THEIR ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT IT AT THE NASC
BLACKEN

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